

Dear Select Board,

I believe there is a discussion on the proposed intersection at the South Walpole common that will be discussed at tonight's meeting. I know a decision on this will have to be decided by ZBA soon.

I am CC'ing others in this email to offer my help. I would like to be involved in the process for any re-design of a new intersection, if that's an option at any time.

I am forwarding to you my original email to ZBA on the topic of a traffic light below, but do have additional thoughts.

I have attached a proposal of where I feel a stop sign should have been placed years ago. I feel that this would help mitigate (not eliminate) current traffic problems in this area. I live at Washington St Ext, and have worked from home since I've moved here. I walk my children to and from school, and am often walking back and forth multiple times a day to Boyden (in the past also to the South Walpole Preschool), because I volunteer at Boyden several times a month. I see, hear and experience traffic down here as is, every single day.

We are in desperate need of a stop sign at the intersection of Water St and Washington St. I can't reiterate this enough. We have to stop cars from speeding down from Route 1 into the intersection where I will literally be crossing the street with my kids and cars don't see us because they're speeding and there's a blind spot from the corner bend.

A traffic light is not the solution. Creating a parking lot in South Walpole by installing a traffic light is not the solution. That Complex is supposed to have 691 parking spots and additional children who will be adding heavily to the traffic. A traffic light won't mitigate anything, it's only pushing the cars around worsening traffic in other areas. I have to emphasize that the 300 unit complex IS adding to the problem. A traffic light isn't going to make 691 more cars disappear.

Another proposal I was contemplating was, maybe Boyden School could extend its parking lot on the right hand side of the school (when facing it) so that cars come off of Washington St and into the parking lot. Right now the right side of the current lot is a ditch that is often flooded. It's a grassy area that appears completely unused. Hale, of course, should have to pay for any alterations. I'm not sure if Boyden owns the land of which I am speaking, but if they own part of this, perhaps it could actually alleviate some traffic problems.

I am willing to help in any way that I can. I have already met with police over the past few years and have filled out traffic reports. I have been in contact w/ the Highway Superintendent. I have done everything I could do to make this intersection safer. I would go so far as to argue that no one wants this intersection safer than I do, as I am in the heart of it every single day, not only walking my own kids back and forth but also their friends, at times my neighbors' children or the 21 girls in my Girlscout Troop. I have been advocating for a safer intersection for years.

Please see additional comments below.

Thank you,

Erica Burdon



Begin forwarded message:

From: erica burdon <ericaaburdon@gmail.com>
Subject: Omni Development - 55 Summer St - recent intersection proposal
Date: January 7, 2021 at 12:04:16 PM EST
To: ZBA <ZBA@walpole-ma.gov>
Cc: Ashley Clark <aclark@walpole-ma.gov>

Dear Zoning,

I attended last night's meeting w/ David Hale and the Omni Reps and still have grave concerns over this Project.

I have marked up the intersection as it will look on a daily basis here in South Walpole. Young children, grades 4 and 5, as young as age 9, will be crossing these intersections, many alone, as they do now, both walking and biking. Not only would a crossing guard be necessary, but a guard wouldn't prevent the mess that this traffic light will bring. I don't believe that Omni understands, or has taken into account, the fact that pedestrian and vehicle traffic, in this area is extremely unique. They haven't considered our peak times. Their traffic study is flawed because they didn't do any single studies during Gillette events.

The Omni reps are dishonest. They claimed in last night's meeting, that the property at 11 Summer St, has fenced in their yard on town lines. They claimed that this fence could potentially be taken out, to install a sidewalk. I know the property owners at 11 Summer St extremely well, and they 100% had their property assessed when they had the fence installed and have proof that it is NOT on town lines. Omni has made many false claims including their statement in past traffic studies of theirs that say their Development won't negatively affect traffic. It absolutely will cause horrendous safety and traffic issues in this area, that will be made worse by a traffic light. That is not the answer. Cars are now going be backed up into the intersection of a traffic light with children trying to cross! It's absurd.

I am backed up by hundreds of residents here, as well as Select Board members, and we won't allow Omni to come here and tear up years of history. We are the Town of South Walpole. We are NOT the City of Cedar Crossing. South Walpole should not conform to fit the needs of a 300 unit "campus." A campus they have called it. The Development needs to conform to South Walpole. We are NOT ok with them tearing down the South Walpole Common, or further putting this entire area in turmoil. I am also not going to allow them to remove the ONE crosswalk at the corner of Washington St Ext and Water St that I use every single day to walk

my kids across the street. The crosswalk that I had to beg the police department several times to put there. Omni wants this area to be walkable, and they are destroying it.

What happens during construction of their new intersection? How long do we need to deal with the mess that will bring? What will the traffic issues look like then?

The problem with this complex is the sheer size of this, and NONE of that will be mitigated by simply changing a small intersection.

I have posted a photo marked up with cars as they'd look on a daily basis with a traffic light. How are children supposed to cross this? How is anyone supposed to leave their street on Washington St Ext? We are a residential neighborhood. We are not Route 1, and we are not the streets of Boston.

The accident data at Washington St and Short St is through the roof! They have needed a traffic light for years. They should have the traffic light. South Walpole does not need or want this.

A garage was denied last night at the ZBA meeting because it went against the character of the neighborhood. A garage was considered too big. This Development is FAR bigger than a simple garage. It is going to kill South Walpole. It's tearing up the history as well as the character.

The only way to allow this Development is to decrease the number of units. I do NOT believe that this can't be done. There are loopholes to every single law out there, and I will not stop fighting this Development until it is found. Hundreds of residents, not only in South Walpole, have taken action to hire a private lawyer who is an expert at 40B developments, and has dealt with David Hale before. He knows the ins and the outs, and there is 100% a way to downsize this project. Please help us do so and do not approve 300 units. Any decrease in size would be beneficial to us all.

Thank you,

Erica Burdon

